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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 000852

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DEPT FOR SA/FO AMBASSADOR QUINN, SA/CT AND SA/A,
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: PRT/GHAZNI - GOVERNOR CONSIDERS SUPPORTING NEW
ARMED GROUPS

REF: KABUL 000559

Classified By: DCM RICHARD NORLAND FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Ghazni Governor Sher Alam, frustrated by his inability to maintain security in several of Ghazni's Pashtun provinces and perhaps also desiring to re-institute a security network that is loyal to him, has in recent weeks created or talked of creating informal armed forces outside the framework of legitimate Afghan security forces. One of these forces was initially envisioned as a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) led by former Nawa district police chief Dawlat Khan (although this idea seems to have been quashed). The second proposed force, far more worrisome, would be under the command of ex-warlord and former Ghazni governor under the Taliban Qari Baba. PRT is engaging Ghazni provincial authorities to make it clear that creating such a force under such leadership would be a regression and would not be in line with Afghan government guidance or U.S. policy. END SUMMARY.

QARI BABA - PTS IN REVERSE?

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12. (C) Qari Baba is a former commander and was governor of Ghazni in the early 1990s under the Taliban regime. He is from Andar, one of the most troubled districts in Ghazni from a security perspective. In the summer of 2005 Coalition Forces detained Qari Baba because weapons caches were found his compound. He subsequently participated in the PTS program, and even went on Ghazni television to renounce his affiliations with anti-government forces.

Since last summer, he has been a regular and morose presence at the Governor's guest house.

13. (C) Recently, Qari Baba has been pressing for a legitimate job with the government. It was suggested he be put to work on security problems in Andar, due to his connections and presumed ability to identify anti-government forces. Governor Sher Alam apparently proposed setting up Qari Baba (or one of his residual sub-commanders) at the head of a 100-person militia, which Sher Alam would supply with motorcycles and small arms. This force would be composed of Qari Baba's former fighters, would not be uniformed, and would not be part of any of the legitimate Afghan security forces (ANA, ANP, etc.). The force would man three checkpoints in Andar, and possibly conduct other operations.

14. (C) Qari Baba told the Governor he was open to the plan (perhaps not wanting to turn down the first opportunity the Governor offered), but an aide told us privately that he was worried that going back to leading what is basically an illegal armed group would not be perceived favorably by the central government or the U.S., and could hurt his chances of receiving the high-level, central government job he has been seeking.

DAWLAT KHAN - FIRED POLICE CHIEF, FIGHTER AT
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LARGE?

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15. (C) Another concern is the provincial government's plan to utilize former Nawa police chief Dawlat Khan to head a Quick Reaction Force to conduct anti-Taliban operations throughout Ghazni. Dawlat Khan was the unofficial police chief in Nawa, the restive southernmost district of Ghazni, for three years. He was appointed by former Ghazni and current Kandahar governor Asadullah Khalid (under whom he had fought during the jihad), and was never vetted by MOI. During his tenure, he cooperated enthusiastically with Coalition Forces on operations, but the government and PRT have heard many complaints that he wrongfully detained personal enemies and extorted money and goods from Nawa residents. Governor Sher Alam removed him in early February after a shura of Nawa elders demanded his departure.

16. (C) Last week, we learned that Sher Alam was setting up Dawlat Khan as the head of a 30-man security force which would operate in Gelan district. This force would consist of Dawlat's allies and relatives who worked for him as police in Nawa. Sher Alam provided Dawlat Khan's force with three motorcycles, an unknown number of AK-47s, and food. Initially, this force was envisioned as a Quick Reaction Force which could operate throughout eastern Ghazni, its relationship to the ANP was unclear. However, this plan appears to have been short-lived. Ghazni Police Chief General Rahman (who was on haj when the QRF plan was hatched) is now planning to make Dawlat Khan police chief in Gelan for a one-month probationary period. During this time, he must demonstrate that he can work with the people and must refrain from taking money from residents to cover his

operating expenses. (NOTE: Given both Dawlat Khan's and Sher Alam's close connections to Asadullah - Sher Alam is Asadullah's brother-in-law - Sher Alam may have felt uneasy firing Dawlat Khan altogether and may be looking for some face-saving way to keep him employed. END NOTE.)

OTHER CONCERNS

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¶7. (C) PRT had strongly recommended to Governor Sher Alam that he replace Dawlat Khan with a professional, experienced police chief. However, Sher Alam instead chose a man who appears to be a personal crony. The newly appointed Nawa police chief, Nooruddin, was a fighter for Sher Alam when he was a Sayyaf commander. He is from Sher Alam's home district of Paghman, and has not previously operated in Ghazni. He is not a certified member of the ANP, and has not received police training. Nooruddin arrived in Nawa with a force of 40 of his own fighters, none of whom was trained police or known to the MOI. Sher Alam claims that because Nawa is such a remote and weakly governed district, he needed to put "a fighter" there; a normal police chief would not be tough enough. However, PRT continues to

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advise him that all police chiefs should be certified ANP and should go through the training program at RTC Gardez. Nooruddin should either be legitimized through this process, or should be replaced by a certified ANP police chief.

¶8. (C) PRT COMMENT: PRT's concerns about these developments are three-fold. First, arming private militias which are not under the umbrella of the legitimate security forces (ANA, ANP, NDS, etc.) is directly counter to the aims of the Afghan government's PTS and DIAG programs. Second, funneling equipment and support to illegitimate operations undermines the major Afghan and U.S. policy goal of empowering and professionalizing the Afghan security forces. Third, the examples cited here show that Sher Alam is attempting to set up a shadow security network which draws in former cronies and reports directly to him. This is a fairly natural tendency for an ex-commander, but should be strongly discouraged.

¶9. (C) While these recent actions are of concern, PRT believes Sher Alam is sincere about enhancing security in Ghazni. In recent months, he has grown more engaged in the process of governance, particularly in regard to security issues and physical reconstruction. Both PRT and maneuver battalion officials are communicating to Sher Alam that, while his intent is valid, creating private militias that bypass the proper channels for use of force is not the answer. Specifically with regard to Qari Baba, we recommended the Governor continue to rely on him for intelligence and advice, but should not arm him in any way. END PRT COMMENT.

¶10. (C) EMBASSY COMMENT: This appears to be part of a recent trend, at both the provincial and central levels, to hire informal militias to address security gaps occasioned by weak ANP/ANA presence. The increasing upsurge in

violent attacks, particularly in the Pak-Afghan border areas, is causing us to re-examine the role of these militias. We are gathering more information on the overall phenomenon but cases such the one cited above where the new militias owe allegiance solely to their former commanders, are definitely a step backwards and should be discouraged. END EMBASSY COMMENT.
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